



Safety Sense



September 2016

**South Dakota Army National
Guard**

**FY 16
12th edition**

An accident by any other name

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Accidents, as defined by AR 385-10, The Army Safety Program, are an unplanned event, or series of events, which results in one or more of the following:

- a. Occupational illness to Army military or DA Civilian personnel.
- b. Injury to on-duty DA Civilian personnel.
- c. Injury to Army military on duty or off duty.
- d. Damage to Army property.
- e. Damage to public or private property and/or injury or illness to non-Army personnel caused by Army operations (The Army had a causal or contributing role in the accident).

All too often though, we are easy to toss the "it was an accident" blanket over any situation in an effort to justify someone's negligence. But an accident is typically the result of at least one person's negligence, and more often than not, more than one person and more than one act of negligence. Accidents are a series of events or actions that culminate in an injury or damage or both. The weather often plays into the accident, or compounds it, but it usually is the result of our actions.

Let's take for instance any vehicle accident. Many times a vehicle accident will involve more than one vehicle, but driver's often fall asleep and roll their own vehicle off the road, or strike a stationary object. But, for our example let's delve into the accident at the intersection where you were waiting for the light to change. Another operator approached you from the rear and struck your vehicle. Being mindful, you had your brake pedal depressed and the impact did not push you into the intersection or another vehicle. The other driver was completely at fault, but there were more than one contributing factor.

- That other driver failed to maintain proper distance.
- That other driver may have been distracted, disoriented or had poor braking qualities (bad brakes), or multiples of those contributing factors.

- Distracted: texting, talking, eating searching for an address
- Disoriented: intoxicated/impaired (by alcohol, illicit drugs, prescription or over the counter medications), poor vision, age, medical condition, lack of experience
- Your brake lights may not be functioning. (Not that this is an excuse, but brake lights are there to signal other drivers of your intention to stop or your presence in traffic).

As you can tell, there are other factors involved that can be attributed to driver negligence. If you aren't not taking the necessary precautions to avoid an accident, are you not negligent?

Now take that same negligence into the work place (remember, an accident is not just cars crashing into each other). In your work space, you have your beverage, it spills and pours onto the floor. It creates a slippery surface. Another employee passes by, slips on the liquid and fractures his arm. Now, obviously your negligence in allowing the spill to occur was the first act of negligence, then there was the in furtherance of negligence by not identifying/warning others nor cleaning up the spill. But then there is also the act of negligence by that other employee for not maintaining situational awareness. We all have the responsibility to stay alert and focused on the task at hand. We all know you should expect the unexpected and we should know to look where we are walking.

Accidents are avoidable in nearly all circumstances. Policies, procedures, guidelines and laws are in place to help reduce accidents. We can reduce the number of injuries to our personnel and members of the community through accident prevention.

Every Member Counts
SOUTH DAKOTA NATIONAL GUARD



House fire survival, you and your family

One of the most preventable home injury and death accidents are fires. Home fires kill greater than 3,000 people annually (not including fire service personnel). Injuries to civilians equate to more than 15,000 each year, with fire departments responding to a fire every 24 seconds in the US.

Many of those fire are preventable. That means many of those deaths, injuries and the estimated 11.5 billion dollars damage and destruction could be avoided.

Home fires still account for the majority of fire fatalities and most of those occur at night. Many of those are children.

Having an escape plan for the home is as important as having a smoke detector or fire extinguisher. You and your children must know and understand the plan. They must understand what the smoke detector sounds like, they must know that smoke fills the room from top to bottom, but other gases are heavier than air so noxious and deadly

fumes may be right on the floor. Therefore they need to understand how and why to crawl out of the home. They must know before they open a door, feel the door for heat. They need to know where the meeting location is. They must know how to call for help if mom and dad aren't at the meeting location.

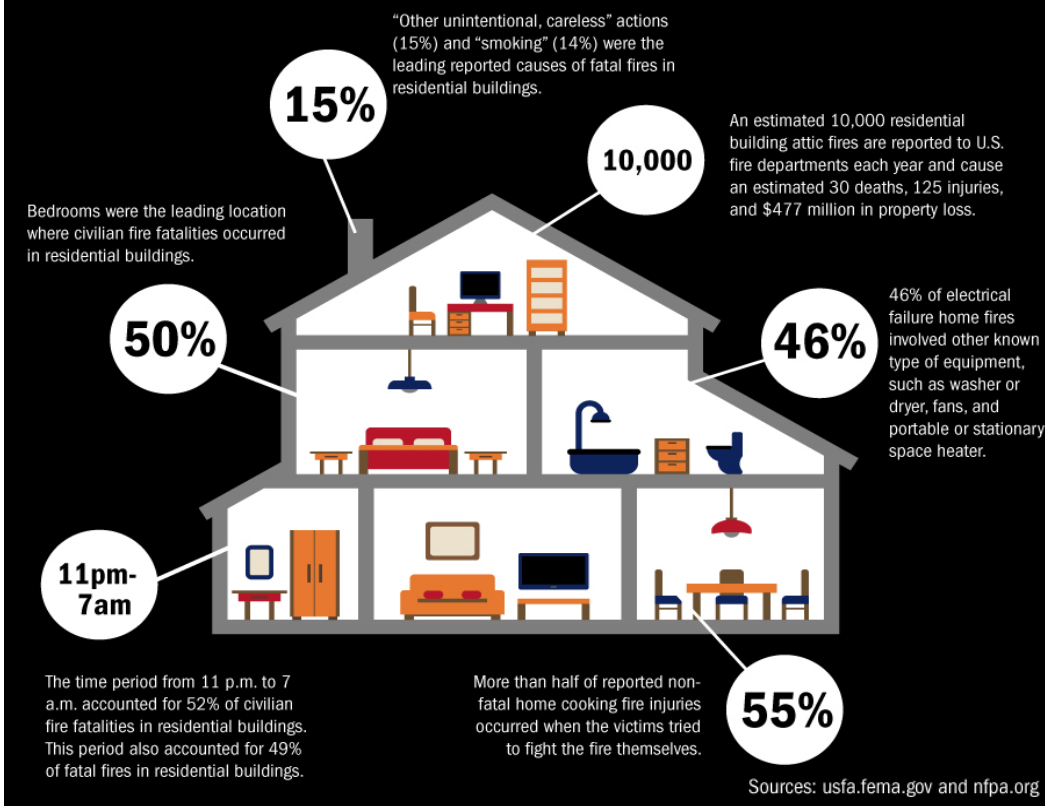
You and your family must have contingencies for these situations as many times the worst case scenario is the case at hand. Without a plan, the disaster is compounded by injury and death. But having the plan with contingencies, exercising the plan and being prepared is one of the best ways to survive a fire in the home.

Another thing to keep in mind: typically, when a person escapes from a burning home and they attempt to return into the building, they don't make it out a second time.

Don't be one of the stories. Don't let your family become one of the statistics.

Part of your plan needs to include fire prevention. Heating systems need to be checked and cleaned, Chimneys need to be brushed, dryer vents serviced and clean, candles limited and monitored and cooking supervised. Smoking still accounts for many deaths and injuries. Using common sense and good housekeeping will aid in keeping you safe in your home.

Residential Fire Statistics



HERE IT COMES



- Treat every weapon as if it is loaded.
- Handle every weapon with care.
- Identify the target before you fire.
- Never point the muzzle at anything you don't intend to shoot.
- Keep the weapon on safe and your finger off the trigger until you intend to fire.

READY ...OR NOT?

Ready ... or Not is a call to action for leaders, Soldiers, Army Civilians and Family members to assess their "readiness" for what lies ahead—the known as well as the unknown.

Throughout our professional and personal lives, events happen all around us. We are often able to shape the outcome of those events, but many times we're not. Navigating life's challenges is all about decision-making.

So are **YOU** ready ... or not?



<https://safety.army.mil>